

NSC BRIEFING

~~TOP SECRET~~
CONFIDENTIAL

Card
25/16 September 1956

SOVIET POLICY SPLIT OVER TITO

- I. Last week, we had the news of Khrushchev's "vacation" trip to Yugoslavia. Since then, there has been a snowstorm of reports and rumors tied to this ^{PECULIAR} ~~unexpected~~ journey. Most of this material claims that Tito--and particularly his effect on the satellites--has caused a new rift within the Soviet leadership.
- A. The American embassy in Belgrade reports a high Yugoslav official as saying recently that Khrushchev is "alone" in the more liberal Soviet approach to Yugoslavia.
1. The Yugoslav official claimed that the other Soviet leaders, including Bulganin and Mikoyan, would turn on Khrushchev "at the first false step."
 2. Yugoslav Vice President Vukmanovic-Tempo has also hinted that Khrushchev may be in trouble.
- THE HYPOTHESIS ADVANCED BY THESE TWO YUGOSLAVS*
B. ~~This Yugoslav hypothesis~~ argues that Khrushchev, having sponsored the resumption of relations with Tito, now finds that Tito is endangering the Soviet system by making trouble in the Satellites.
1. The purpose of Khrushchev's visit, according ^{LY} ~~to this theory~~, is to get Tito to "call off the dogs."
- II. Reports from Warsaw give us some further details. These reports claim that Khrushchev and [#] Bulganin lost their usual majority in a recent meeting of the Soviet party's central committee at which the Yugoslav question was debated.

CONFIDENTIAL

DOCUMENT NO. 26
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S 01996
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1-14-80
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE 1-14-80 REVIEWER: 372044

- (WARSAW)
- A. The new majority faction, according to these reports, was headed by Molotov and Mikhail Suslov--a presidium member believed to be in charge of East European party affairs.
- B. Molotov and Suslov are said to have argued that the Yugoslav Communists represent Social Democratic, rather than Leninist, tendencies.

III. Even before the ~~surprise~~ Khrushchev visit, we had received several reports ~~claiming that the Soviet Communist party had sent a~~ ^{OF A STRONG} ~~strong~~ letter ^(SENT) to the various Satellite parties early this month. This letter reportedly warned the Satellites against Tito's influence, and against imitating him or being too friendly with him.

- A. ~~Some of these reports suggested that the Soviet letter resulted~~ ^{THIS LETTER WAS REPORTEDLY THE RESULT OF} ~~in~~ ^(SOVIET) a meeting of the central committee: the same meeting at which--according to our later Warsaw reports--Khrushchev and Bulganin were voted down.

1. If these earlier reports are true, ^(DATE OF THIS) the meeting was ^(SUCH THAT IT WAS) probably not a full plenary session of the central committee, ^(INSTEAD) but a rump meeting of important central committee representatives in Moscow.

- B. Other information [REDACTED] states that the 25X1C Central Committee also adopted a resolution terming as "premature" a toast by Bulganin at his banquet in honor of Tito (wherein he labeled Tito a "Leninist").

IV. Leaving all these reports and rumors aside, we believe ~~it likely~~ that the consequences of recent Soviet policy toward the Satellites and Yugoslavia are causing varying degrees of concern to all the Soviet leaders.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

- A. Both Tito's continued pressure for "liberalization" of the Satellite regimes and the alarming results of some of the "liberal" policies being enacted in Eastern Europe may have forced the Soviet leaders to decide to toughen up.
- B. However, it is incorrect to presume that Khrushchev stands alone as the champion of a more liberal policy toward Yugoslavia.
1. Two other leaders--Bulganin and particularly Mikoyan--have been at least as prominently associated with the new Soviet policy toward Yugoslavia as has Khrushchev.
 2. Also, last year's decision to reestablish a close relationship with Yugoslavia was ~~probably agreed upon by~~ ^{FORMALLY APPROVED BY THE} ~~CENTRAL COMMITTEE AS A WHOLE & a majority of the Soviet leaders.~~
- V. It would be overly-optimistic to accept this present rash of reports as proof that the Soviet leadership is facing a crisis over this issue.
- A. Khrushchev, Bulganin and Mikoyan are probably the most powerful in the hierarchy and seem to agree on the general course of Soviet policy.
- B. Furthermore, the Khrushchev-Bulganin-Mikoyan alliance has shown no sign of disruption.
- insert from p. 4* C. Considering the undercutting to which Molotov has been subjected, it seems improbable that he could lead an effective opposition to Khrushchev's leadership.
- D. Khrushchev's successful "packing" of the central committee, last February, also militates against the chances of a leadership upheaval.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

1. FOR EXAMPLE, IF A MAJOR LEADERSHIP SPLIT ACTUALLY IS OCCURRING,
IT WOULD BE INCREDIBLE FOR THE SENIOR
Finally, it seems unlikely that the Soviet leaders ~~TO BE~~
~~closely identified with relations with Yugoslavia would be~~
~~(SIMULTANEOUSLY ABSENT~~
~~away from Moscow~~ If, in fact, a major split had developed.

INSERT

- ②. Khrushchev, however, was away from Moscow on vacation for more than two weeks before he left for Belgrade.
- ③. Bulganin has been vacationing in the Caucasus since 1 September.
- ④. Mikoyan ~~has been~~ ^{WAS} away ^{FROM} since 14 ^(10 24) September, as the leader of the Soviet delegation to Peiping.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NSC BRIEFING

~~TOP SECRET~~

27 September 1956

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

SOVIET POLICY SPLIT OVER TITO

- I Last week, we had the news of Khrushchev's "vacation" trip to Yugoslavia. Today, we have the even more surprising news that Tito and a group of Yugoslav officials have flown back to the USSR with Khrushchev. In the period between these two events, we have received a mass of reports and rumors tied to Khrushchev's peculiar visit. Most of this material claims that Tito--and particularly his effect on the satellites--has caused a new rift within the Soviet leadership.
- A. The American embassy in Belgrade reports a high Yugoslav official as saying recently that Khrushchev is "alone" in the more liberal Soviet approach to Yugoslavia.
1. The Yugoslav official claimed that the other Soviet leaders,

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

including Bulganin and Mikoyan, would turn on Khrushchev "at the first false step."

2. Yugoslav Vice President Vukmanovic-Tempo has also hinted that Khrushchev may be in trouble.

B. The hypothesis advanced by these two Yugoslavs argues that Khrushchev, having sponsored the resumption of relations with Tito, now finds that Tito is endangering the Soviet system by making trouble in the Satellites.

1. The purpose of Khrushchev's visit, accordingly, is to get Tito to "call off the dogs."

Reports from Warsaw give us some further details. These reports claim that Khrushchev and Bulganin lost their usual majority in a

~~TOP SECRET~~
Recent meeting of the Soviet party's central committee at which the Yugoslav question was debated.

A. The new majority faction, according to these Warsaw reports, was headed by Molotov and Mikhail Suslov--a presidium member believed to be in charge of East European party affairs.

B. Molotov and Suslov are said to have argued that the Yugoslav Communists represent Social Democratic, rather than Leninist, tendencies.

III Even before the Khrushchev visit, we had received several reports of Soviet Communist party letters sent to the various Satellite parties early this month.

A. These letters were reportedly the result of a meeting of the Soviet central committee: the same meeting at which--according to our Warsaw reports--Khrushchev and Bulganin were voted down.

~~TOP SECRET~~

1. If these earlier reports are true, the date of this meeting was such that it probably was not a full plenary session of the central committee, but instead a rump meeting of important central committee representatives in Moscow.

B. The satellites were reportedly warned against Tito's influence and told not to imitate him or be too friendly toward him.

25X1C

C. Information [REDACTED] states that one of the letters concerned the Soviet-Yugoslav talks in Moscow last June.

1. The letter reported that Tito had declared in these talks that the Yugoslav Communists were not ready to accept Soviet views completely.

2. This letter also contained a Central Committee resolution, terming as "premature" a toast by Bulganin at his banquet in honor of Tito (wherein he labeled Tito a "Leninist")

~~TOP SECRET~~

... all these reports and rumors aside, we believe that the consequences of recent Soviet policy toward the Satellites and Yugoslavia are causing varying degrees of concern to all the Soviet leaders.

- A. Both Tito's continued pressure for "liberalization" of the Satellite regimes, and the alarming results of some of the "liberal" policies being enacted in Eastern Europe, may have forced the Soviet leaders to decide to toughen up.
- B. However, it is incorrect to presume that Khrushchev stands alone as the champion of a more liberal policy toward Yugoslavia.
 1. Two other leaders--Bulganin and particularly Mikoyan--have been at least as prominently associated with the new

~~TOP SECRET~~

Soviet policy toward Yugoslavia as has Khrushchev.

2. Also, last year's decision to reestablish close relations with Yugoslavia was formally approved by the Central Committee as a whole.

It would be overly-optimistic to accept this present rash of reports as proof that the Soviet leadership is facing a crisis over this issue.

- A. Khrushchev, Bulganin and Mikoyan are probably the most powerful in the hierarchy and seem to agree on the general course of Soviet policy.
- B. Furthermore, the Khrushchev-Bulganin-Mikoyan alliance has shown no sign of disruption.

~~TOP SECRET~~

- For example, if a major leadership split actually is occurring, it would be incredible for the senior Soviet leaders to be simultaneously absent from Moscow.
2. Khrushchev, however, was away from Moscow on vacation for more than two weeks before he left for Belgrade.
 3. Bulganin has been vacationing in the Caucasus since 1 September.
 4. Mikoyan was away from 14 to 24 September as the leader of the Soviet delegation to Peiping.
- C. Considering the undercutting to which Molotov has been subjected, it seems improbable that he could lead an effective opposition to Khrushchev's leadership.

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

D. Khrushchev's successful "packing" of the central committee, last February, also militates against the chances of a leadership upheaval.

CONFIDENTIAL